

And you will return to Hashem, your G-d, and listen to His voice. (30:2)

The reason for repentance should be a desire to come closer, to attach oneself to Hashem. This does not mean that *teshuvah*, repentance, spurred on by a desire to be rid of suffering, or to garner Heavenly blessing, is not effective. It certainly is. *Teshuvah* is effective. It is only that one who repents because he loves, achieves greater efficacy than one who repents out of fear. Furthermore, there is a designated time when one's *teshuvah* is most appropriate and hence achieves greater productivity. During the forty-day period from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* through *Yom Kippur*, Hashem waits for us to return to Him. At this time, His "arms" are open and ready to embrace us. *Horav Shimshon Pincus*, *zl*, presents a powerful analogy to underscore the spiritual advantage of the *yemei Elul v'yemei haDin*.

A certain community did not have a *bais ha'knesses*, edifice dedicated solely for the purpose of coming together to *daven*. The members of the community sought every avenue to construct a *shul*. Buildings cost money, and this community did not have money. Not permitting their lack of funds to stand in the way of fulfilling their dream of having their very own *shul*, they decided to purchase a large trailer and transform it into a *shul*. The company that delivered the trailer brought along a hoist that would lift the trailer up into the air and transport it to its designated place. The day arrived; the trailer was hoisted up into the air and one of the *shul's* members guided the massive trailer to its place. While it was up in the air he pushed and pulled, until he had the trailer centered above the place, and it was then lowered to the ground. As soon as its placement was completed, the electricians and carpenters did their work, putting in electricity, air conditioning, bookcases and tables. Finally, the work was completed. Their *shul* was ready for *davening*. How shocked they were when, to their chagrin, they realized that the *shul* had been centered in the wrong direction. East was west. *Mizrach* was *maariv*.

What could they do now? It was impossible to raise the edifice off the ground. A young boy observed their quandary and asked, "I do not understand. Just the other day we saw how one man was able to single-handedly maneuver the trailer in place. Why can we not take a group of strong men, lift the trailer up in the air, and turn it around? The men told him, "Are you out of your mind? The trailer weighs several tons. We are unable to lift such a building." "If that is the case, how did that one man complete the task all by himself?" "Fool! Did you not notice that it was held up in the air with a hoist? All he had to do was direct its placement, which was simple as long as the hoist kept it suspended in the air."

A similar idea may be applied to the forty-day period when *teshuvah* is most accessible. During *Elul* everything is up in the air. Nothing has been decreed, written or sealed. Whatever might be decreed against us can still be changed. Once *Yom Kippur* passes, the "trailer" is down on the ground and most difficult to move.